

We in the Wisconsin DNR- Bureau of Forest Protection would like to extend an invitation to our fellow cooperators by soliciting information or topic ideas from our readers. If you have any ideas for the fall newsletter, contact:

Wisconsin DNR-The Division of Forestry "The Point of Origin" P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921

608-266-2359 or 608-267-7677

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Visit our website for more information at: www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/Fire/

The Nature Conservancy - Four Agencies are Better than One!

The key to being effective and efficient in the multi-area fire management business is through the creation of 'partnerships'. In order to achieve this, The Nature Conservancy's Fire Initiative recently began a cooperative planning effort to reintroduce fire into fire-adapted ecosystems across the country. The nationwide effort promotes ecologically sound fire management strategies to improve the health and viability of fire-adapted ecosystems.

So, you may ask...who is The Nature Conservancy partnering with here in Wisconsin? To form the 'Fire Learning Network (FLN)' of Wisconsin, the answer is the USDA Forest Service, Wisconsin DNR - Black River State Forest, and The Department of Defense - Fort McCoy Military Reservation. This partnership

hopes to assist in maintaining sustainable forest management, improve military training and safety and improve habitat for the endangered Karner Blue Butterfly.

The FLN also plans to work with communities at risk from wildfire through planning and forest fuels treatments to lower potential risk. A one million-acre site of oak/pine ecosystem has been selected in central Wisconsin to participate in this program.

For more information, visit the Fire Learning Network's Website at www.tnc-ecomangement.org/fire 🔥



All Stressed Out in the Bark Beetle's Paradise



Salvage operations in pine stands following a fire can help minimize insect damage to fire-damaged trees as well as nearby healthy stands. Bark beetles are the biggest

concern in a pine stand. Bark beetles breed and feed in freshly cut, killed, or stressed pine. Populations of bark beetles can build up when a large food source is available to them such as the weakened and damaged pine following a fire, wind event, or drought. Bark beetles will reproduce in fire damaged trees and populations begin to build up to very high numbers. When the fire damaged trees are no longer a viable food source the beetles will move to healthy pine stands nearby and can mass-attack healthy trees, overcoming the trees defenses (primarily pitch drowning) to successfully infest and kill the tree.

The life cycle of bark beetles can be completed in 4 to 5 weeks. Bark beetles over winter as adults which emerge in the spring and bore under the bark to mate and lay eggs. Larvae feed in the inner bark, creating intricate galleries and disrupting the food and water carrying capacities of the tree. Larvae will pupate and adults will emerge from the tree to seek out a suitable tree to mate and lay their own eggs in. Multiple generations can occur in a single summer.

By salvaging fire damaged trees as quickly as possible you can prevent bark beetles from producing multiple generations. It is important to remove the timber from the site since bark beetles can utilize freshly cut trees as brood material. By promptly removing the fire damaged material from the site you will reduce the number of beetles that are attracted to the site, reduce the number of beetle generations produced, and reduce or eliminate any threat to neighboring healthy stands of trees. 🔥

Linda Williams
Forest Health Specialist- Wisconsin DNR

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Wisconsin's Wildland-Urban Interface



Although they occupy the same locality, these northern Juneau County homes differ greatly in terms of Defensible Space.

The Problem:

Wisconsin has been experiencing an increase in housing development in the Wildland-Urban Interface, that fringe area between urban and rural areas. This is of great concern to fire officials when homes are built in areas of highly flammable fuels. The concern increases when the homes themselves are made of highly flammable fuels. The issue is amplified when roads and driveways are narrow or covered by soft sand, making it impossible for emergency vehicles to get to homes. The overall WUI issue is further compounded when there are no codes or ordinances in place to help regulate building materials, landscaping, or access in fire-prone areas.

Unfortunately, even though housing in the WUI is increasing, the number of available firefighters and equipment is not increasing at the same rate. Often times, firefighters in fire-prone areas are working as volunteers and may not be fully aware of the potential problems in a community they are helping try to protect. These firefighters may also be expected to know how to evacuate communities and fight structure and wildland fires all in the same day. That kind of demand requires a higher level of training, which may not always be available. In the mean time, wildfire has traditionally been viewed

as a sinister force that knowingly destroys life and property. People are thought of as the helpless victim while firefighters are seen as heroes waiting to save the day. There is a general misconception that if a fire should happen, structural or wildland, there is going to be a fire truck parked around the corner waiting to save the helpless victim. It's time for a cultural change.

The Solution:

Roles need to be redefined so that homeowners and firefighters become partners and fire is realized as necessary and inevitable part of nature. Through redefined roles, homeowners and fire officials form a partnership to increase safety in the WUI. In this situation, homeowners take principle responsibility for assuring low home ignitability. Fire officials provide technical assistance as well as emergency response.

The ideal situation is for homes to be designed, built, and maintained to withstand a wildfire without the intervention of the fire department. Situations change from ones where structures are essentially additional pieces of fuel for a fire, to ones where the vegetation around a home has been modified enough to become a fuel break. This would increase the chance of structures being able to survive without outside help. This ideal situation lowers the overall ignitability of a property which will help increase structural protection effectiveness where it is needed as well as decreasing the level of wildland fire threat to homes, not to mention increasing safety for firefighters.

This new approach is what we are calling FireWise Wisconsin. In the FireWise Vision, wildland fires can occur in the future without the loss of homes and structures. 🔥

Jolene Ackerman
Wildland Urban Interface Specialist-Wisconsin DNR

From the Editors...

Our purpose is to provide you with information about the services, products, and direction of the Wisconsin DNR and the various partners in protection, referring specifically to wildfire prevention, suppression, and outreach. Building partnerships is the key to success!



Can you guess what caused this wildfire? (answer on the back page)



These were the string of railroad fires that occurred just outside of Stone Lake in northwest Wisconsin in April of 2003.



Designed by L. Pohlod, Blue Sky Illustration & Design, LLC



"Only You Can Prevent . . . What?"

Young and old alike have been hearing Smokey's message, "Only You, Can Prevent Forest Fires", since 1944. While Smokey's message of fire prevention has stayed largely the same over the years

it has undergone a bit of an evolution. As our understanding of the role that fire plays in the wildland has grown, Smokey's message has been fine-tuned.

The word "Wildfires" now replaces "Forest Fires", because we now understand that some fires in the forest are important for maintaining forest health. It is the uncontrolled wildfires that worry Smokey the most. Wildfires have always presented a threat to wood resource and wildlife habitat. Today, as more and more people choose to move to their dream home or

cabin in the woods, they are finding that their homes are at risk from wildfire as well.

As more of these homes appear in the woods, Smokey's message is more important than ever. A few decades ago, rural fire agencies had only one or two homes at risk when there was a fire in the forest. Today they have hundreds of homes to protect. Firefighting resources have not seen the same increase in numbers. Homeowners are finding that it is up to them to create an environment around their homes, which will help to keep it safe from wildfire.

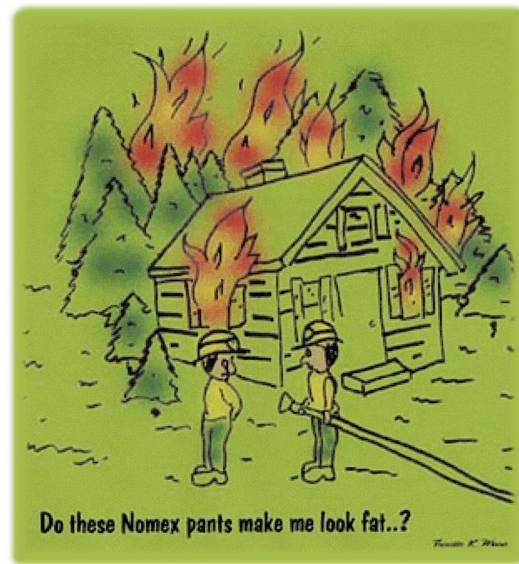
A fire safe home starts with Smokey's traditional message - Prevent Wildfires.

Most wildfires are caused by the careless acts of people. However, because wildfires do occur, residents of Wisconsin need to take the time to prepare their homes living in or near the wildland urban interface. 🔥

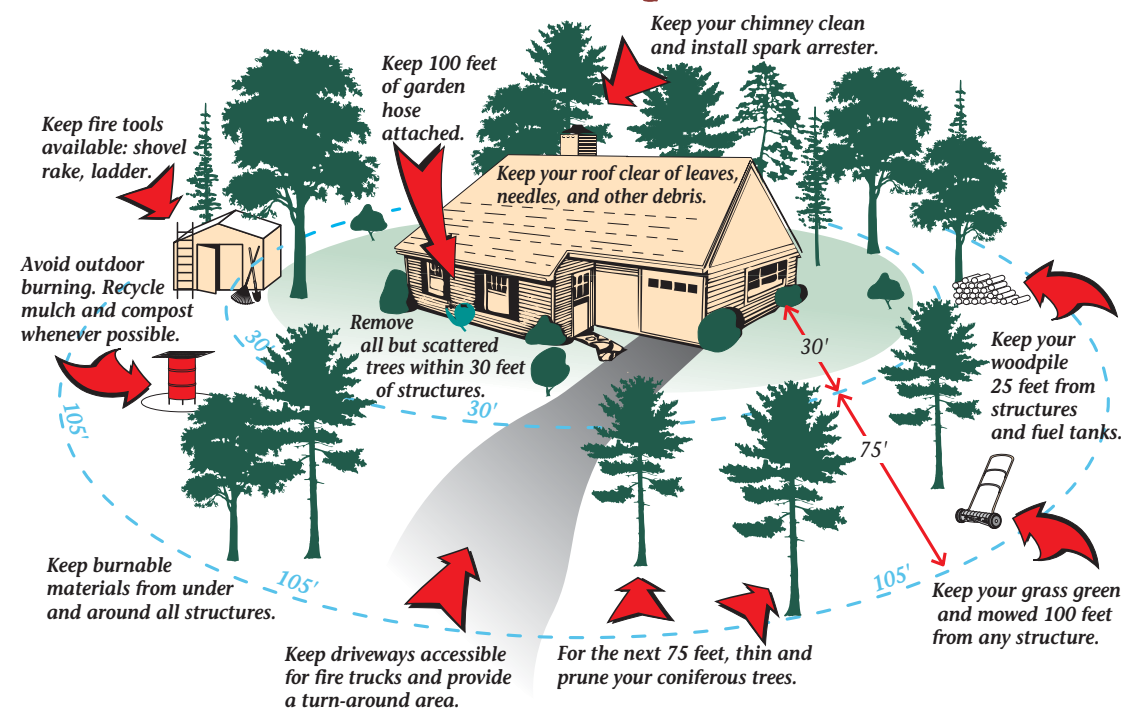




60 Years of Smokey Bear
Smokey Bear first appeared in a poster in 1944, pouring a bucket of water on a campfire. In 1952, Congress passed the Smokey Bear Act taking him out of the public domain and placing him under the control of the Secretary of Agriculture. The Act provided for the use of collected royalties to help fund forest fire prevention and protect Smokey from exploitation. By 1970 Smokey has become one of the most recognizable symbols in America. In 1984 the US Postal Service issues a Smokey Bear Commemorative Stamp. Even now, we still have a lot of work to do. Each new generation must be reminded of their role in wildfire prevention. August 9th, 2004 marks Smokey Bear's 60th birthday.



Are You Prepared?



FireWise Communities/USA Recognition Program

In effort to create a partnership between fire officials and private citizens in fire-prone areas as a way of reducing wildland fire hazards, the DNR has recently begun the FireWise Communities/USA Recognition Program. The program is a proactive approach that teaches fire-prone communities to work together to protect themselves from a wildfire before it occurs. Through the program, communities are provided with educational materials, guidance, and support to help them improve their chancing of surviving a wildfire.

There are several goals of the program:

- ✦ Reduce the overall risk of wildfire losses in a community, including loss of life as well as property.
- ✦ Improve access for emergency vehicles and firefighting equipment.
- ✦ Create public awareness of wildfire potential and what steps should be taken to maintain an acceptable level of fire readiness.
- ✦ Encourage the development of partnerships between private citizens and community leaders.
- ✦ Encourage communities to take responsibility for their ignition potential.
- ✦ Focus on the development of local solutions to local problems.

The first community in Wisconsin to agree to participate in the program is one in Marquette County, near the location of the 2003 Crystal Lake Fire. For more information, contact Jolene Ackerman at 608-267-7677 or jolene.ackerman@dnr.state.wi.us ✦

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

This publication is available in alternative format (large print, Braille, audiotope, etc.) upon request. Please call 608/67-7494 for more information.

Wisconsin Grant Update

The 2004 Forest Fire Protection and Volunteer Fire Assistance grant application deadlines are fast approaching. The 2004 Volunteer Fire Assistance grant applications will be due June 1, 2004. The 2004 Forest Fire Protection grant applications will be due July 1, 2004. Applications numbers were up for both grant programs last year as Fire Departments faced financial challenges from traditional funding sources.

The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant program is open to all County Fire Associations and is a 50% cost share grant utilizing federal dollars. The maximum grant awarded is \$10,000 (\$20,000 project



DNR Forest Ranger Ralph Sheffer (left) presents a grant check for \$1,694.06 to Pardeeville Fire Chief Rick Wendt through a Forest Fire Protection Grant. They used the grant money towards the purchase of pager equipment, protective clothing, and wildland fire-fighting equipment.

The Menominee Project

The Menominee Reservation has been a model of sustainable forest management in Wisconsin for over 140 years, well before the concept of sustainability was defined by resource managers. Their tradition of sustained yield management provides for social, ecological, and economic benefits. This summer, Menominee Tribal Enterprises is sponsoring a Student Conservation Association Fire Education Corp. crew to assist with a homeowner's wildland fire assessment project in the Legend Lake area on the Menominee Reservation. Under the guidance of crew leader Dee Lyons, volunteers will be assessing approximately 2,000 homes using the FireWise Wildland Fire Risk and Hazard Severity Assessment Form. The form has been incorporated into PDA's (personal digital accessories) and linked to

proposal). This year, the funding level is expected to be \$120,000. There were 30 applications for the VFA grants last year with 20 being funded.

The Forest Fire Protection (FFP) grant program is open to all Fire Departments in Wisconsin with wildfire suppression agreements with the DNR. The FFP grant program is also a 50% cost share program utilizing state and federal monies. The emphasis of the program is to increase wildfire suppression capabilities and safety. The maximum grant awarded is \$10,000 (\$20,000 project proposal). This year the funding level is \$775,000. Last year, there were 300 FFP grant applications received and 270 grants awarded.

It is now time to look ahead to the 2004 grant cycles. Both grant applications will be mailed out soon. Grant application materials are also available online @www.dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/vfa/grants. Please plan now to take advantage of these valuable grant programs. ✦

Chris Klahn
Cooperative Forest Fire
Specialist- Wisconsin DNR

handheld GPS units to identify the locations of structures within the sites that are being assessed. Digital pictures of structures and their surrounding are taken during the assessment.

The collection of information is compiled into a database, which allows for quantitative analysis of the hazard assessments and subsequent deduction of appropriate treatments/mitigation ideas. The data is available visually in various ArcView layers.

The intent of the project is to share relevant information with local fire departments, appropriate state agencies and the Midwest Region of the BIA. The goal is to promote and facilitate cooperative working agreements and partnerships in the area of homeowner wildland fire risk assessment. ✦

Wildfires- Different Rules, Different Tools

10 Standard Wildland Fire Orders

1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts
2. Know what your fire is doing at all times
3. Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire
4. Identify escape routes and safety zones, and make them known
5. Post lookouts when there is a possible danger
6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
7. Maintain prompt communication with your forces, your supervisor and adjoining forces
8. Give clear instruction and insure they are understood
9. Maintain control of your forces at all times
10. Fight fire aggressively, having provided for SAFETY FIRST

How Forest Fire "Danger" is Measured

This sign found at many Ranger Stations throughout the state, displays the current local fire danger rating. The rating shown on the sign refers to the burning condition list below:



Extreme

Explosive conditions. Fires start easily, burn fiercely and crown readily. Often very difficult or impossible to control during the day. Burning is not recommended.

Very High

Very dangerous conditions. Fires start easily, spread very rapidly, crown and spot. Very difficult to control. Burning is not recommended.

High

Dangerous conditions. Fires start readily from a match or sparks, spread quickly, and spot readily. Difficult to control. Burning is not recommended.

Moderate

Fires start from a match or burning embers, spread quickly in dry grass or leaves. Burn with extreme caution.

Low

Fires will start from an open flame, spread slowly and in absence of wind tend to go out. The safest time to burn. ✦

Get'em While Their Hot!

See below for details to order your Fire Prevention Kit which includes this unique Pin the Hat on Smokey Bear poster and more!



Fire Prevention Kit Order Form

For a limited time only, you can order a one-of-a-kind fire prevention kit! The kit includes coveted items such as various DNR publications, Smokey Bear guidelines, grant information, a video and guide on fire prone property, a snazzy poster or two and a few other trinkets and must-haves! Availability is in short supply- only **300 kits** are being sent out. So, fill out this order form and mail it in ASAP to the address below. You can't afford not to!

Date	Name	
Organization		
Street Address		
City	State	Zip
Business Phone	E-mail Address	

Clip above and mail to:

Purchasing Agent
c/o Wayne Behrens
Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
518 W Somo Avenue
Tomahawk, WI 54487-1118

Only **You** Can Prevent Wildfires